

City of Bellevue
Wilburton Commercial Area
Citizen Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E-108

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeremy Barksdale, Sarah Chong, Shari Einfalt, Glen Griswold, Jay Hamlin, Maria Lau Hui, Chris Johnson, Debra Kumar, James McEachran, Andrew Pardoe, Daniel Renn, Lei Wu, Don Weintraub

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alison Washburn, Matt Jack

OTHERS PRESENT: Bradley Calvert - *Department of Planning and Community Development*, John Savo – *NBBJ*, Keith Walzak – *NBBJ*, Melissa Alexander – *NBBJ*, Daren Crabill - *NBBJ*

RECORDING SECRETARY: Audio Recording, transcribed by Bradley Calvert

1. Call to Order and Approval of Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Co-chair Wu.

Co-chair Wu asked if any members had any comments regarding the agenda. There were no comments and the agenda was unanimously approved.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Co-chair Wu asked if there were any comments regarding the meeting minutes from the January 5th, 2017 meeting. There were no comments

❖ **Action Item:** *Ms. Kumar made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. McEachran.*

3. Public Comment

Jesse Clawson stated that she represented the owners of 11911 and 11811 NE 1st Street. She stated that they were in attendance to listen to the discussion of the CAC, and that their properties were located in the southern area of the study area. She stated that they are interested in obtaining as much height and density as possible and that they would be in attendance of every meeting to listen to the discussion. Ms. Clawson stated that she was hopeful that the CAC would see the opportunity and flexibility that her client's properties possessed.

Todd Woosley stated that he in attendance present to represent his family's property that is located east of Lake Bellevue, Brierwood Center, comprised of four buildings. He stated he was pleased to see that density, building height and form, and floor area ratio (FAR) were part of the agenda and that they were elements that they were most interested in as an outcome of the CAC process. Mr. Woosley stated that they were also part of the

BelRed Corridor planning initiative. He said that now that the location of the Wilburton and Spring District light rail stations are confirmed that the Brierwood Center properties were clearly within the ¼ mile radius for transit oriented development. Mr. Woosley stated that he wanted the CAC to be aware that the Brierwood Center properties meet the criteria for a transit oriented development location and that the current FAR of 2.0 is not compelling to redevelop the site. He stated that the economics made more sense to hold onto the properties as single story strip retail than to sell the properties for redevelopment. Mr. Woosley stated that the height and FAR as a result of this study would need to be compelling enough for the owner of an income producing property to redevelop.

4. Design Modules and Stakeholder Input to Date

Mr. Calvert prefaced the presentation by quickly summarizing the packet materials delivered to the CAC members prior to the meeting. He stated that the meeting minutes would be included in every packet prior to each meeting and that the Committee should review the minutes prior to meetings for omissions and inaccuracies.

Mr. Calvert highlighted the stakeholder feedback summary included in the packet. He stated that the land use and urban design consultant, NBBJ, conducted interviews with stakeholders and that this document summarized their comments and would be discussed later in the presentation.

Mr. Calvert highlighted the planned and implemented bicycle plan, the Housing and Human Services sections of the Comprehensive Plan, and information on the relevant light rail stations to the study area from Sound Transit. He stated that additional information on East Link light rail would be included in future meeting packets, including station design and the NE 8th crossing.

Mr. Calvert acknowledged that a prior request had been made for the City of Bellevue's park master plan, and stated that the document was too large to print for each member. He stated that the entire master plan could be found on the City of Bellevue's website, and that the meeting packet included existing and planned park project information in the Wilburton and BelRed subareas. Mr. Calvert called attention to the map illustrating the 1/3rd mile walkable access to parks, that highlights a majority of the study area is not within 1/3rd mile walkable to a park. Mr. Calvert concluded that demographic information was also included in the packet and would be discussed later in the presentation.

Mr. Calvert began the presentation by explaining to the Committee the discussion on design modules is to provide background information on many of the elements they will hear discussed by stakeholders during public comment and throughout the CAC process, including height, form, and FAR.

Mr. Calvert made note of the references made to FAR in the public comments and explained that it is a measurement of total building area in relationship to the total site area. He stated it serves as a measurement of density. Mr. Calvert referenced the presentation diagram that demonstrated that achieving a designated FAR can be reached through several building configurations, such as reducing the floor plate size and increasing the total number of floors.

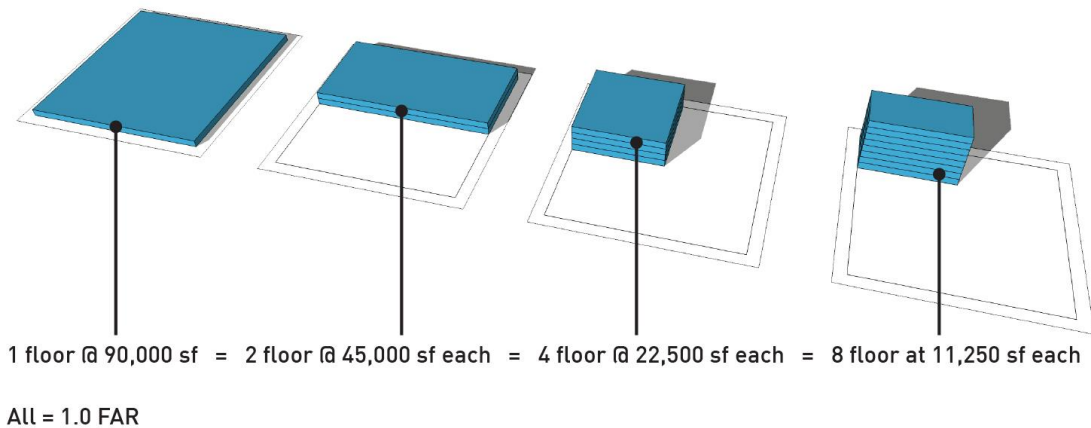


Figure 1 – Diagram exhibiting distribution of FAR

Mr. Calvert discussed the FAR Amenity Incentive System, and referenced its application in Downtown and BelRed. He explained that the system is set up to provide public benefits with new developments such as weather protection, art, pedestrian oriented frontage, below grade parking, and public space in exchange for more density. Mr. Calvert explained that there is a base threshold for development intensity and a maximum, and that by providing the incentives a development can achieve maximum density and height. He also acknowledged that specific neighborhoods or districts provide incentives for particular services such as child care facilities. Mr. Calvert stated that it is one of many tools that the Committee may consider for the Wilburton Commercial Area.

Mr. Calvert stated that design guidelines and requirements can also influence the height and form of a building. He provided the examples of setbacks and stepbacks, and their relationship to form and composition of a building and the pedestrian environment. He stated that a setback is how far a building is placed from the property line, or the back of a sidewalk. He referenced that downtown has a typical setback of 0', creating the urban wall for pedestrians. He stated that the tower stepback references the distance that a tower stepbacks from the façade of the podium, which creates the pedestrian scale of the public right of way. Mr. Calvert continued by discussing the building form and its composition of the base, middle, and top which is what creates a diminished visual scale of a high rise building.

Mr. Calvert introduced Keith Walzak representing the land use and urban design consultant, NBBJ. Mr. Walzak stated that he was going to discuss some of the feedback heard from the stakeholder interviews. He referenced the matrix distributed in the meeting packet.

Mr. Walzak stated that they met with 25 different property owners and representatives within the Wilburton Commercial Area. He referenced a map that illustrated the locations of the property owners they met with. He stated that the interviews were conducted on the evening of January 5th and the morning of January 6th and that the interviews provided the opportunity for the stakeholders to provide their ideas on the study area, and respond to a series of standard questions from the consultant. He stated that these questions included what the overall vision of the Wilburton Commercial Area should be in 25 to 30 years, what comes to mind when considering the study area as the next urban neighborhood,

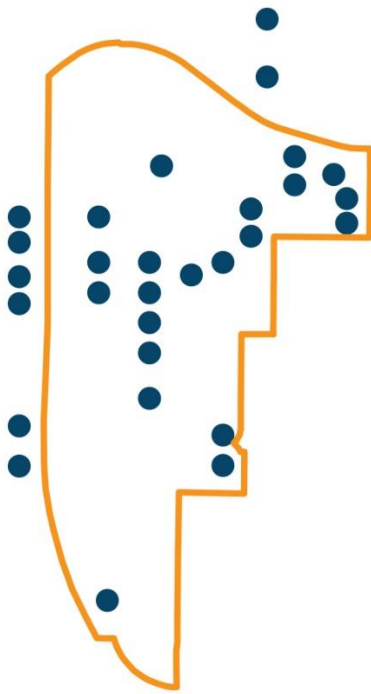


Figure 2 – Map of stakeholders interviewed by the consultant

what case studies or projects across the country come to mind, and what is the measure of success at the end of the planning process. Mr. Walzak stated that the stakeholders were very well informed and enthusiastic about the planning initiative.

Co-chair Barksdale asked if this included residential and commercial property owners. Mr. Walzak stated he didn't think residential owners were represented. Mr. Calvert stated that there is a list of stakeholders that are contact for events such as the interviews, and also stated that the number of residents was very limited within the study area boundary.

Mr. Walzak stated that they asked for input from the stakeholders regarding the existing regulatory environment. He stated that they also asked what might encourage change in the study area.

Mr. Walzak highlighted that the stakeholders express a vision for the area that included a mixed-use neighborhood and focusing on the transit connectivity. He stated that some stakeholders believed that the study area should be an extension of downtown but appear different. Mr. Walzak stated that building towards the future and providing flexibility

were key points made by the stakeholders, particularly flexibility. He stated that one stakeholder called attention to the remnant spaces that could be left from infrastructure improvements such as the light rail line. Mr. Walzak referenced places like Seattle's viaduct and the space that remains beneath infrastructure improvements as an area of importance. He stated that importance of designing for connectivity was a frequent comment and that the stakeholders recognized the opportunity for the Wilburton Commercial Area to be a special place. Mr. Walzak referenced the rarity of so many infrastructure improvements including the Eastside Rail Corridor, light rail, and Grand Connection and how the stakeholders were observant of the unique opportunity. Co-chair Barksdale asked what is meant by the term "connectivity." Mr. Walzak responded that connectivity included the intersection of the multi-modal components such as the Eastside Rail Corridor and Grand Connection, the light rail line, and creating pedestrian connectivity from one location to another.

Co-chair Barksdale asked if the reference to connectivity included community. Co-chair Wu followed by stating connectivity could be from a people perspective. Mr. Walzak stated that there was a lot of discussion regarding the relationship between the Wilburton Commercial Area and the Wilburton Hill neighborhood to the east and how the businesses in downtown could relate to those in the Wilburton Commercial Area.

Mr. Walzak provided a list of case studies in the presentation that were discussed by the stakeholders, and stated that he would like to hear of case studies from the Committee members as well. He stated that the Committee would discuss case studies in future meetings.

Mr. Walzak stated that success to the stakeholders would be through expediting the planning process. He stated that stakeholders felt that flexibility would encourage change

as well. Mr. Walzak stated that the stakeholders were very well informed on the importance of the Grand Connection, Eastside Rail Corridor and East Link light rail extension.

Mr. Walzak stated that they heard very specific feedback regarding the City regulatory environment, and referenced elements from BelRed and downtown. He stated that the stakeholders felt that there was disconnect between FAR and building height, that the two measurements are not compatible with one another. Mr. Walzak referenced the area “T2” and the need for compatible transit-oriented development and its relationship to downtown. Mr. Calvert offered clarification that the reference to “T2” was from the ULI Advisory Panel report, and that it is the area between NE 8th and NE 4th in the Wilburton Commercial Area. Mr. Walzak stated that the feedback from stakeholders was that the current zoning was not adequate for a future vision of the study area.

Mr. Walzak stated that flexibility and a predictable process was important to the stakeholders to encourage change. Mr. Renn asked about the comment on the previous slide that the Spring District had not evolved as planned. Mr. Walzak responded that the comment was in relationship to zoning, FAR, and building height. He stated the FAR seemed right, but there was not the ability to achieve greater heights, per stakeholder comments. Mr. Hamlin followed that he believed it to be true that REI’s relocation of their corporate headquarters to the Spring District did not desire a greater density. Mr. Walzak referenced that the current growth is in response to construction cost and may not have been predicted in the planning process. He stated that the stakeholder feedback regarding flexibility may have been in response to the Spring District, and that the lesson learned that some things may have been planned right but the market pushed things in a different direction. Mr. Renn stated that is something that should be understood better prior to setting goals for the Wilburton Commercial Area.

Mr. Walzak stated that the stakeholders were excited about the planning process but wanted it to be streamlined and predictable, in that the vision should be responsive to the market, while creating flexibility.

Mr. Weintraub referenced a previous slide regarding the requirement for 100% retail and asked for the meaning. Mr. Walzak stated that it was in reference to the requirement for 100% ground level retail. Mr. Calvert confirmed that this was in reference to encouraging active facades in downtown. He stated that first level retail was typically exempt from FAR. Mr. Hamlin stated that the requirement can leave empty space. Mr. Calvert stated that this could lead to an interesting conversation on active street frontage, and that it may not always need to be achieved through retail space.

Mr. Johnson suggested looking at the north end of Boise, ID as a case study, in particular Hyde Park. He stated it was lower density but was preserving residential while becoming denser. Mr. Calvert stated that they would come back in the next meeting with case studies that responded to the evening’s conversations.

Mr. Pardoe stated that he would like to see parkades, such as those in the West End of Vancouver, BC as part of the case studies. He said currently the walkshed is limited to where one can legally park. He stated that the City was already car oriented and he did not want to encourage more cars, but right now people do drive. He referenced Vancouver and Pike and Pine (Seattle) and the ability to park on the street. He stated that it encouraged them to stay longer. Mr. Pardoe stated there was very little walk off parking in downtown or the Wilburton Commercial Area.

John Savo from NBBJ stated that he was going to pin comments up from the discussions.

Ms. Kumar asked about Redmond Town Center and that there appeared to be a lot of development. She stated it didn't appear to have much residential. Mr. Pardoe stated there was a hotel, and that the residential development has been north of Town Center, closer to City Hall. Mr. Pardoe said anecdotally, that Redmond Town Centre appeared to be struggling. Co-chair Wu believed that the original development plan included residential but it didn't happen. Mr. Savo stated there was a fair amount of commercial office space at Redmond Town Center. Ms. Kumar said that it could be a case study on what not to do. Mr. Savo stated that they also heard from the stakeholders to consider Seattle's monorail and lessons learned.

Co-chair Wu asked if the case studies should lean towards those with high capacity transit. She said Redmond Town Center may be a case of what not to do, but it doesn't include rail. Mr. Hamlin stated that rail will ultimately serve the area and that it may turn out to be a good development. Mr. Pardoe stated that parking didn't save Redmond Town Centre and that downtown Redmond had plenty of parking.

5. People and Demographics

Mr. Calvert stated that he and Melissa Alexander from NBBJ would be providing some background demographic data and then open up a discussion amongst the Committee members regarding people and demographics.

Mr. Calvert began by stating that Bellevue's population is nearly 140,000 residents and is expected to be over 160,000 by 2035. He continued by saying that population has become more diverse in recent years, highlighting the recent news that Bellevue was now a majority minority city. Mr. Calvert described that a growing segment of the population was foreign born, particularly from Asia. Mr. Pardoe asked what the daytime population was. Mr. Calvert stated that the downtown Bellevue workforce was over 40,000 but a presentation in a future meeting would provide background information on employees and companies in Bellevue.

Mr. Calvert stated that the foreign born population has steadily increased since 1990 and makes up 39% of the population. He stated the countries of origin were primarily from Asia including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. Mr. Calvert acknowledged that a smaller portion were also from Europe and Latin America. Mr. Calvert provided an exhibit showing the shifting demographics with the race/ethnicity of the population over 65 being 78% white, and the under 18 population being 42% white. He acknowledged the significant increase in Asian and Hispanic population.

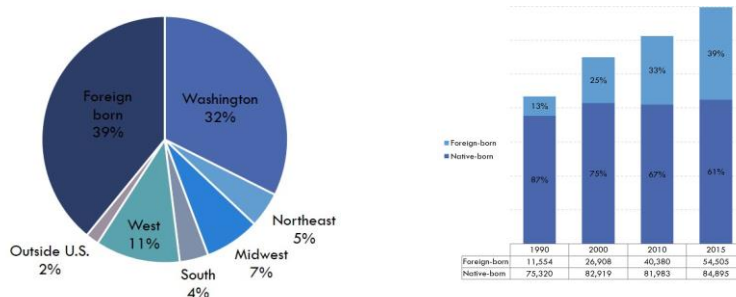


Figure 3 – Foreign born and native born population distribution and growth

Mr. Calvert stated that Bellevue was against national trends for household composition. He stated that while smaller households were still the majority in Bellevue there have been increases in households of married couples with children, and two person or more households. He acknowledged the slight decrease in single and married households without children. Mr. Calvert stated that the numbers are the inverse of a nationwide trend, and then acknowledged that Seattle was recently declared the city with the fastest growing “nuclear family” population.

Mr. Calvert introduced Melissa Alexander from NBBJ. Ms. Alexander stated that the consultant team utilized a national dataset that categorizes the population into different groups based on key lifestyle metrics. She stated these metrics include age, sex, education, employment, marital status, housing characteristics, home value and then paired with consumer data information that includes what and how people shop, how they spend their free time, and where they shop. She stated that this categorizes the population into 14 “life mode” groups.

Ms. Alexander highlighted the “life modes” most prevalent in the region, city and study area. She stated the first group was one of established wealth, predominately home owners, married couples with children, and are active in their community. Ms. Alexander stated the second group was similar in that they are prosperous married couples living in older suburban homes, though they prefer a slightly denser urban setting, are a more diverse population group, and tend to live a more healthy and active lifestyle. She stated the third most prevalent group tends to be younger, single, well educated, partial to a more urban lifestyle, and considerate to the environment. Ms. Alexander stated the fourth most prevalent group tended to be older millennials, majority college educated, and utilize the internet a great deal.

Ms. Lau Hui asked what exactly constituted the study area that was considered. Ms. Alexander responded that it was the area defined by the project area boundary in addition to a half mile buffer. Mr. Renn stated that the buffer would include a large number of the Wilburton Hill residents.

Ms. Lau Hui stated that we didn’t know the number of residents of the study area and how that compared to Bellevue as a whole. Mr. McEachran stated that he would like to be able to access this information to absorb more of it. Mr. Calvert responded that the presentation would be posted on the project website following the meeting and that he would include the full presentation in the next meeting packet to be distributed. Mr. Calvert stated he would like to open the meeting to a discussion amongst the Committee members.

Mr. Hamlin asked the date of when the information was collected. Ms. Alexander responded that it was 2016.

Co-chair Barksdale state he wanted to think about who is being served and not served by their communities and how the Wilburton Commercial Area can be informed by community needs. He posed the question as to who the Bellevue community currently serves. Mr. Griswold asked if they were to consider all of Bellevue. Co-chair Barksdale confirmed that they were to consider all of Bellevue.

Co-chair Wu said the idea is to think of the community of the Wilburton Commercial Area and beyond and who the community is to be for. Ms. Kumar stated that Bellevue does not currently serve the low income population. Mr. Hamlin asked if she was

speaking to only downtown or Bellevue as a whole. Ms. Kumar stated Bellevue in general, citing that apartment living in Bellevue was expensive making it difficult for certain income levels. Mr. Renn stated that could only be accommodated with subsidies, citing the cost difference between a home in the Wilburton Hill neighborhood and other locations in the country, such as Fort Wayne, IN. Mr. Renn posed the question of how to reconcile that difference. Mr. Pardoe responded that there is subsidized housing, citing the August Wilson House in downtown. Ms. Kumar stated that there are ways to provide affordable housing and that the low income population is one area that is underserved.

Mr. Johnson stated that a larger category of workforce housing, at or below market rate is needed. He stated that there is a large gap for those that are at or below the median income for single family homes or condominiums. He stated that those that travel to Bellevue for employment are only finding housing opportunities further and further out from downtown.

Co-chair Wu stated that she was aware of aging in place, and that she is aware of some retirement communities, but for an area with such strong amenities such as the medical institutions, Eastside Rail Corridor, and light rail she would like to see better opportunities for residents to age in place. Ms. Lau Hui referenced intergenerational housing. Co-chair Wu highlighted the ability to not have to go to a senior center but rather being close to all of these amenities. Mr. McEachran stated that the Human Services Commission is informed by the needs update and that he strongly encouraged reading the housing element of the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that it includes statistics and information relevant to the conversation that were developed by the Technical Advisory Group on affordable housing. Mr. McEachran would like to see the new statistical evidence incorporated with the existing work.

Mr. Renn stated that the Wilburton Commercial Area has nearly no residential now. He stated that if the Committee wanted to make this a walkable community that they would have to find a way to entice developers to give up on the office developments and to build residential. He stated that if it all goes to office and retail then no one will walk there and use the Eastside Rail Corridor and Grand Connection.

Co-chair Barksdale posed the question to Mr. Renn, who he imagined living in the Wilburton Commercial Area. Mr. Renn responded that the area is similar to the Spring District except that it is closer to downtown and that the Grand Connection could make it very easy to walk to downtown offices. He stated he would hope that a mix of people would be living there in modest price housing.

Ms. Einfalt stated that she would like to advocate for employees of Group Health and Overlake Hospital as she said they are challenged with recruitment for mid and lower level positions because they would have to commute such long distances because they can't afford to live in Bellevue. She also stated that reducing capacity on nearby streets could create challenges for those accessing the two institutions. Ms. Einfalt stated she didn't know if emergency services had a chance to study that as well.

Mr. Weintraub stated that some people just don't want to rent, they want to buy. He stated that technology workers may make six figures but still are challenged in affording housing that cost \$1,000 per square foot. He stated they may be able to afford \$500,000 to \$700,000 townhomes or condominiums but they don't want to have to drive from nearby cities. He stated that more modest priced housing that was still walkable should be in the Wilburton Commercial Area.

Mr. Pardoe stated that he would be interested in seeing some data on whether people would like to rent or buy in the city. He stated that downtown continues to build mainly apartments, and that he didn't know if people were buying as much anymore. Mr. Renn stated that prior to 2007 they were all condominiums being built, and after 2007 he believed they were afraid to build condominiums. Mr. Pardoe posed the question whether that was because condominiums were riskier or because people weren't buying them. Mr. Weintraub stated that there are some laws during a 5 to 7 year period where developers tend to get sued. He stated that developers can build a high rise and lease them out in six months or take a few years to build a high rise, sell them and likely face litigation at the end. Mr. Pardoe asked that if the Committee determines condominiums are what is needed how it could be made a better deal for developers without the associated risk. Mr. Johnson stated that Skylar Wilson, Senior Economist at Zillow, could be a resource as to why there are so many more rental units.

Co-chair Barksdale stated that he would like to address the nightlife, stating that it doesn't exist in Bellevue. He stated that it is an area that should be addressed.

Ms. Kumar stated that she had recently heard a story regarding artist housing called ArtSpace. Ms. Lau Hui stated that it is something the Arts Commission is currently working on. She stated they are trying to recruit opportunities for ArtSpace. Mr. Hamlin stated that part of the problem is that Bellevue doesn't have the older building stock that could be converted for artist housing. He stated that cities like Oakland or Seattle possess those types of properties. Mr. Renn stated that when the Spring District was under consideration there was a City led tour of Portland's Pearl District and that its type of building stock doesn't exist in Bellevue. Mr. Hamlin stated that places like Pioneer Square had the kind of building stock that facilitates artist housing, including tall floor to ceiling spaces. Ms. Kumar stated that places like Walla Walla had buildings absent of tall floor to ceiling spaces that held young wineries for a certain number of years to help businesses get started. Ms. Lau Hui stated that the Committee should be pursuing not just diverse demographics in population but also diverse businesses that attract creativity to the area to make it more vibrant.

Co-chair Wu stated that the area, in a global perspective, is very attractive to the Pacific Rim and that the hope is Bellevue can be a first stop destination.

Mr. Pardoe stated that it would be interesting to find out why the nightlife is absent in Bellevue. He stated Bellevue does not have any independent coffee shops, independent bookstores, nightclubs and that downtown Bellevue is a very sterile, family-oriented place. Mr. Hamlin agreed with the statement and said that the restaurants were the same way. He stated that the types of businesses in Capitol Hill, Belltown, and Ballard were missing in Bellevue. Mr. Pardoe stated it would be nice to have non-chain establishments, independent restaurants.

Mr. McEachran stated that it would be nice to create a magnet of neighborhoods that would draw people to walk their families into the neighborhood. He stated this would create vibrancy.

Co-chair Barksdale stated that a survey would be conducted soon and that any additional information that the Committee members would find helpful should be requested. Mr. Calvert stated that he is going to provide the needs assessment cited by Mr. McEachran in the next meeting packet. Mr. McEachran stated that the needs assessment is updated every two years and is available online.

Mr. Pardoe stated that the Burke Gilman trail brings a lot of people to the University of Washington area and that he is curious as to whether there are other centers on the trail and if so what encourages users to go to these centers. Mr. Griswold cited Fremont and the high density of young professionals that visit the businesses and breweries in the area. Mr. Pardoe stated it would be nice for people to bike to the Wilburton area for activities. Ms. Kumar stated she would like to know what would bring Downtown residents over to the Wilburton area and what would they come to. Mr. Calvert stated that one of the Council Principles was to define that unique niche that complements BelRed and Downtown.

Co-chair Wu stated that she would like to know what draws people from the greater region to the Wilburton Commercial Area. Mr. Renn stated that the Wilburton Trestle will draw people as a unique attraction for Bellevue, particularly for the views. Mr. Hamlin said there were also other places in the Wilburton Commercial Area that provided good views. Mr. Hamlin stated it would be nice to know what would draw the residents east into the Wilburton Commercial Area in addition to Downtown residents.

6. Visioning Session

Mr. Calvert stated that the visioning session was going to be similar to what the consultant (NBBJ) conducted with staff and the stakeholders. He stated that the session would look at the existing attributes and try to define what was important to the Committee. Mr. Calvert introduced John Savo, Keith Walzak, and Daren Crabill from NBBJ to lead the visioning session.

Mr. Walzak stated that he wanted to provide a series of questions to get the Committee to think about what the Wilburton Commercial Area could look like in the future. He stated that categories included the environment, connectivity, culture and character, and economic development.

Mr. Walzak stated that the Wilburton Commercial Area has been referred to as the next urban neighborhood. He posed the question to the Committee on what ideas come to mind when thinking of the Wilburton Commercial Area as a neighborhood. He stated that these comments would establish the planning vision. Mr. Savo followed by asking what is the Wilburton Commercial Area going to feel like, and what will its final character lead to.

Co-chair Wu stated that she sees the opportunity for an urban village and as its own complete neighborhood with the medical institutions, technology companies, startups, and residential. She also stated that it should serve beyond Bellevue and the Eastside, and play a regional role.

Mr. Pardoe stated that when he came to Bellevue he saw the Wilburton Commercial Area as “the Heights.” He stated that with the views of the city, the Olympic Mountains, and the lake that the western edge lends itself to premium housing.

Mr. Griswold stated that something that is missing from Bellevue are small community theaters. He stated that Kirkland and Issaquah have them, but Bellevue is missing a community theater that would bring people in for plays and a dinner and to walk around in the evening. Mr. Savo stated that the previous discussion on nightlife could include a wide variety of entertainment, some of which are maybe community based.

Co-chair Barksdale stated that regarding environment this should be an active space given its connectivity with the Eastside Rail Corridor and the Grand Connection. He stated he also saw it as an open space where people would want to linger and that it is something community engaging and not just an open space. Co-chair Barksdale referenced an interactive art piece at the Bellevue Arts Museum that encouraged engagement and he saw this as a place where those kinds of things could happen.

Mr. Hamlin stated that there needed to be a destination in the Wilburton Commercial Area with all of the movement occurring from the Eastside Rail Corridor, Grand Connection, and light rail. He stated that there needs to be a reason to bring people in and hang around. Mr. Savo stated that it could be multiple destinations. Ms. Kumar referenced an I-405 crossing alternative for the Grand Connection visioning that included a lid over the interstate and she could see that as being a destination. Mr. Weintraub stated that he moved to Bellevue from Dallas, TX and that they have Klyde Warren Park, which is 5 acres that connections uptown and downtown and that it transformed the area. He stated that people go there as a destination and that locals also go there. He stated it would be a good case study to analyze.

Mr. Pardoe stated that there are four very different modes of transportation and how far you can get within thirty minutes by each mode. He stated that they are different modes and different pools of people to draw from including Redmond and Seattle. Mr. McEachran stated that third place was important, particularly as it related to healthy seniors. He provided the example of going to the hospital and being able to go to the Wilburton Commercial Area for lunch. Co-chair Wu stated that the really powerful network of transportation connections must be taken advantage of. She stated that she can't think of another place in the region with these kinds of connections and that there is a very strong advantage. Co-chair Wu stated that at times she has three generations, herself, her mother, and her daughter going places, and that it would be nice to have a place where everyone could have something to do. Mr. Savo stated that age diversity should be considered with ethnic diversity.

Ms. Lau Hui stated that Bellevue currently has a Main Street but it is a very small segment. She stated that she wondered if there was a historic aspect that could be incorporated. Mr. Savo asked what she thought that particular historical aspect could be. Ms. Lau Hui stated that maybe it is a visual or physical connection that could anchor Main Street on the east side. Mr. Pardoe stated that Wilburton is one of the, if not the, oldest neighborhoods in Bellevue.

Mr. Johnson stated that it is important to acknowledge that there is an existing diversity of land use patterns in the study area. He stated that the existing built environment really varies with Lake Bellevue, the commercial properties along 120th Avenue NE, to open space and educational uses in the southeast corner. He stated that it was important to acknowledge that and he hoped in the future there would be room for economic diversity. He stated he wanted to be sure there was room for small and community oriented businesses, not just Class A office space and residential towers. Mr. Johnson stated that the Committee should be taking advantage of its natural assets and that there is a diverse economic base. He referenced the ULI Advisory Panel report and the separate districts that created opportunities for startups, acknowledging that the Impact Hub had shut down. He stated that he felt there should be room for incubators and people who are starting their businesses in addition to those who are established, providing services that people need in their lives such as small community oriented services.

Ms. Chong stated that she sees this as a place of high intensity and a great number of people. She stated that through connectivity and economic development that the study area could address the need for workforce housing and that everything could be connected to work, and entertainment and is no more than a five minute walk. Co-chair Wu stated that she saw this study area having many more people than a typical residential neighborhood, one that is well connected to other neighborhoods and to transportation.

Mr. Walzak asked the committee to comment on the public-private investments in the area. Ms. Kumar asked if there were companies already interested in the study area, citing Starbucks and their roastery in Seattle, and that something like that could be a good fit for the study area. Mr. Savo stated that the vision that comes out of the Committee will help attract those businesses, and how the visioning develops will determine what kinds of businesses it will attract. He stated that the values and goals that the Committee are establishing will develop a broad idea for the types of businesses could serve the area. He confirmed that the Committee was imagining a mixed use neighborhood with diverse uses. Mr. Hamlin stated that he imagined businesses that contrasted downtown, such as artists and neighborhood businesses such as those in Capitol Hill and Ballard. Ms. Kumar stated that the small businesses are great but can they contribute to public-private partnerships in the manner that a larger corporation could. She cited REI, and Mr. Renn confirmed their retail location and corporate headquarters has demonstrated commitment to the area.

Co-chair Wu stated that we may not know the specific businesses that can be attracted but we can strengthen elements such as transportation that can make access to the area easy. She stated that making the area welcoming to many cultures could also attract businesses that are diversity oriented and would consider the area more valuable because of its diversity.

Mr. Pardoe stated that there is a large foreign born population and questioned whether places like Uwajimaya Village grew organically and maybe that is something the city should plan for or incentivize. He stated that reaching out to cultural centers may be a good idea to determine if the Committee wanted to create a strong Asian or Indian center. Co-chair Wu stated that maybe it could be a multi-cultural center. Mr. Pardoe acknowledged the area around the Microsoft campus and it becoming predominately Indian and that people he knew who moved from India stated that it was even better than India. He stated that much of the country was represented in two blocks and that Bellevue doesn't have that kind of community. Mr. McEachran discussed Crossroads and the development of affordable housing, senior housing, a community center and developing into a multi-cultural community.

Co-chair Barksdale stated that he would like to see the public-private partnership focus on creating businesses that are community centric and not just thinking about whether it financially pencils. He stated that he would like to see the decisions be made based on what the community wants and needs. Mr. Savo stated that was different from making it a destination to the region. He stated it doesn't mean that the study area couldn't be both.

Mr. Pardoe stated that there are three major parks in the area and bringing them into consideration. Mr. Renn stated that the Wilburton Hill neighborhood had the greatest access to parks but that the surrounding parks should be tied into the Wilburton Commercial Area with walking trails to create a destination. Mr. Pardoe stated that a green space at the northern end of the study area could serve as an anchor.

Ms. Einfalt stated that she believed the medical community was going to continue to grow in the study area in relationship to Bellevue's growing population. She stated that Overlake was already planning a five story tower addition to replace the most aged building they possess. She stated that there are existing medical office buildings that are aging that could use revitalization and that certainly the north end will continue to grow in relationship to the medical uses. Mr. Walzak stated that a major part of NBBJ's work is the planning of medical campuses. He stated that there is a major role in understanding community health and the role of hospitals in advancing community health. He stated that one view could be envisioning the Wilburton Commercial Area as a health district and that medical uses could be scattered throughout the community so that every move is to build a health community. Ms. Einfalt stated that there is a greater desire for both outpatient and more advanced healthcare to be done in the community rather than going to Swedish or the University of Washington and it is driving a lot of Overlake's future planning.

7. Organizational Framework

Co-chair Barksdale stated that an agenda modification would be needed to discuss any communication with boards, commissions, stakeholders, and the public outside of the Committee meetings.

Mr. Savo stated that they wanted to look next at the physical assets of the study area. He stated that a few of the Committee members stated that there should be a regional draw to the Wilburton Commercial Area. Mr. Savo stated that the scale of the study area can allow for many things to happen but there still needs to be a larger vision that pulls everything together that creates something more compelling that attracts businesses and people. He stated that it may have some attributes of downtown but would still be a different community.

Mr. Savo stated that some of the assets just outside the study area boundary could influence the study area as well. He confirmed many of the assets regarding transportation, parks, and access to the library. He also discussed the Spring District, including REI and GIX, the latter providing an education and innovation component. He asked the Committee if there was anything missing. Mr. Renn stated that the map did not include the Botanical Garden. Ms. Lau Hui stated that there was the Children's Museum. Mr. Savo stated that the new school will also be important. Mr. Johnson stated that the Mountain to Sounds Greenway and trail network that connects Lake Sammamish and Kelsey Creek is an important element.

Mr. Savo stated he wanted to talk about the physical attributes. He stated that there is a great amount of grade change. Mr. Walzak referenced a cross section and that there was a great deal of grade change going to the Wilburton Hill Neighborhood, but that the grade change as an aggregate was not that significant. He stated that it was a total of approximately 50' of separation. Mr. Walzak stated that was significant because it would influence the appropriate height and its relationship to the surrounding context. Mr. Renn stated that the neighborhood was another 40 or 50' above, and that the residents enjoyed their view to downtown. Mr. Walzak stated that striking a balance between views and building heights will be an important issue. Mr. Savo stated that the scale of the building footprints could be important. He stated there was a difference between buildings with a large footprint that are maybe only six stories tall and how they could create a wall versus a smaller footprint and taller buildings that may have increased spacing.

Mr. Walzak stated that the water conveyance system is another element of organization when considering the drainage from Lake Bellevue. He stated this included the open drainage and the wetland to the south. He stated that only 10% was actually piped. Mr. Hamlin stated that the wetland is totally ignored and could be a significant asset. Mr. Renn stated that the main sewer run along the Eastside Rail Corridor would also need to be considered. Mr. Walzak stated that one of the case studies referenced by the stakeholders was the San Antonio Riverwalk. He stated how the entire water feature was redirected to create a placemaking and economic development tool. Ms. Wu asked how Lake Bellevue came to be. Mr. Calvert stated he would provide background information to the Committee.

Mr. Walzak stated that there is a significant number of parks supporting the area, but they were all outside of the Wilburton Commercial Area with the exception of the Eastside Rail Corridor which could turn into a linear park system.

Mr. Walzak referenced a diagram of the viewsheds and where there are view assets such as those to Mt. Rainer. He stated that the obvious views would look across to downtown from the high point in the Wilburton Commercial Area. He posed the question as to what other important views should be considered. Mr. Savo stated that new buildings could create new views or they could block existing views. He stated in previous residential studies done for downtown that the units with views to Seattle were the units to be occupied first over the ones with views to Mt. Rainier. Mr. Hamlin stated that most views would be to the west. Ms. Einfalt stated that she had amazing views to the Cascade Mountains from Overlake Hospital from many locations and that those views shouldn't be ignored. Mr. Renn stated there used to be a view to the Space Needle from NE 8th Street.

Mr. Walzak stated that the notion of edges and connectivity were important and were dramatically different on all sides. He stated that I-405 was a solid edge with some connection compared to the north edge being more transparent to the Spring District. Mr. Walzak stated that the edge to the east is affected by topography and the uses. He stated the edges to the south form a green edge. Mr. Pardoe stated that the crossings over I-405 were extremely pedestrian hostile. He stated that his wife refuses to walk from downtown to the Whole Foods in the Wilburton Commercial Area despite it not being a far distance. He suggested looking at the Microsoft crossing over 520 and its ability to mitigate the impacts of the interstate. Mr. Pardoe stated that he liked the idea of the lid to improve the pedestrian experience, but even something less could improve the conditions. Mr. Hamlin stated that NE 8th is also an edge because it is limiting to cross as a pedestrian. He stated that the Eastside Rail Corridor can also be an edge as it blocks some ways through it. Mr. Hamlin also stated that Main Street is a challenge because you cannot go straight through to the Botanical Garden. Mr. Pardoe stated that the interstate cloverleaf is not an urban interchange and acknowledged ULI's recommendation for a single point urban interchange. He also stated that Main Street needs a staircase that connects to allow access to the Botanical Garden. He stated he prefers using NE 4th Street just because it is direct access. Mr. Savo stated the scale of the blocks should be considered and how pedestrian connections can break up the blocks to create more intimacy and opportunity for access points.

Co-chair Wu stated walking across NE 8th Street over I-405 was very dangerous. She also stated that there are strong connections from the outside but there needs to be more connections internal to make it friendlier to cyclists and pedestrians. Mr. Savo asked if anyone on the Committee disagreed with that statement, and no one objected. Ms. Einfalt stated that there are some existing hazards that need to be corrected such as Chic-Fil-A

and the traffic on 116th Avenue NE.

Mr. Walzak talked about the planning capital improvements such as the Grand Connection and street improvements. He stated that the block configuration remains large and impedes on pedestrian friendliness. Mr. Hamlin stated that the most important issue is making those crossings better. He stated that he liked the idea of the lid, but ultimately the crossings just need to be made better. Mr. Hamlin stated that NE 12th Street had a better crossing, and that the Microsoft connection was really good. He stated that Main Street was the worst crossing. Mr. Savo stated that this is a challenge across all communities and referenced Seattle's discussion of placing a lid over I-5. He said nationwide communities are seeing the damage that interstates inflicted on communities.

Mr. Walzak stated that land ownership was important and highlighted a graphic that showed public and quasi-public lands that may have different opportunities from privately owned parcels.

Mr. Walzak referenced the number of new projects since 2000. He stated there was a lot of relatively new buildings and lease agreements and that it could serve as a constraint to a grand vision. Mr. Savo stated that it would take time to realize the vision with the more recent developments.

Mr. Walzak referenced the sub districts from the ULI Advisory Panel. He stated they would develop additional ideas as well. Mr. Savo stated that at an initial glance the ULI recommendations made sense based on the uses in the particular districts, but that it was also interesting that the roads were seen as barriers. Mr. Savo stated that it may be a good idea to consider some of the roads as linkages and spines and not just boundaries. He stated there were other means besides ULI on how the community could be organized. Mr. Walzak stated that the "T2" district would have its own variations. Co-chair Wu stated that the ULI report points out strengths and to take those considerations forward but not letting the ULI recommendation serve as a constraint.

Mr. Walzak referenced graphics that demonstrated other possibilities. The first showed the Grand Connection terminating into a public space with high density development around it.

He stated the second option turns the streets into the public spaces such as boulevards and grand streets. Mr. Walzak stated this would rethink the right of ways and the spaces between buildings and that the street network is the defining infrastructure to create place. He stated they would be multi-modal and that each street would be different. Mr. Savo stated that the wider the street the taller the buildings and that could be another means to consider organization. Mr. Savo stated that none of the graphics were intended to advocate for a particular organizational method, and that it would likely be a hybrid of ideas but that these systems could encourage the Committee to think differently about the organization.

Mr. Savo stated that the regional connections could be defining features, particularly the Eastside Rail Corridor. He stated that it could strictly serve as a pedestrian and cyclists path, or that it could have businesses framing each side such as retail.

Mr. Walzak stated that the final graphic used natural systems to organize development and intensity. He stated that they could be zones that radiate out from each natural feature and inform a development pattern in between each one. He stated that he wanted to use these to obtain feedback from the Committee in order to begin generating alternatives.

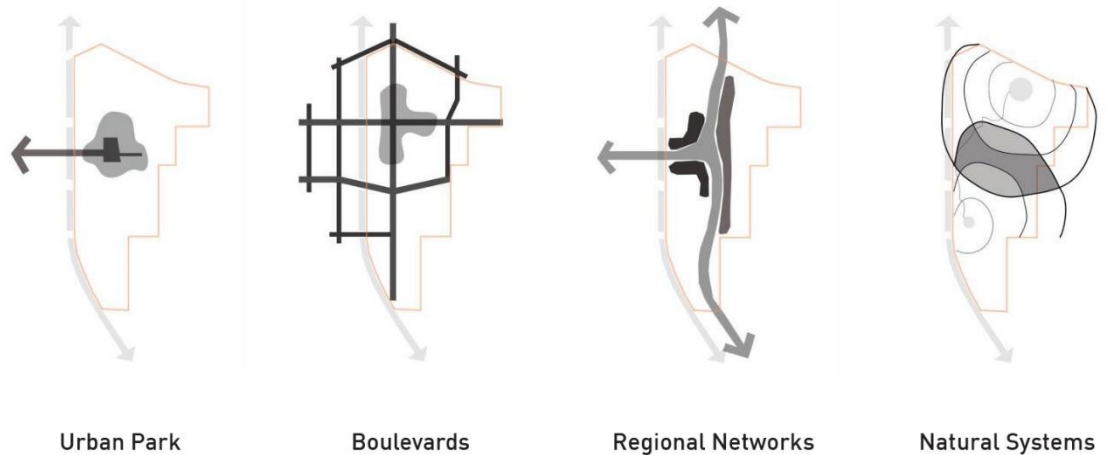


Figure 4 – Consultant developed concepts for organizational frameworks

Co-chair Wu stated that the graphics felt like theoretical frameworks and asked whether the alternatives would need to be competitive to one another. Mr. Savo stated no, that they could be hybrids. Mr. Renn stated that the idea of the exhibited regional network demonstrated cafes and businesses along the trail and cited that it was a goal of the Downtown Park that never happened. Mr. Walzak stated that the organization around the Eastside Rail Corridor could require a different form to the east. He stated it could create entrances on both sides of the property, the Eastside Rail Corridor and the streets. Mr. Savo stated that the organization of I-405 and the Eastside Rail Corridor could create high intensities near the interstate and begin to reduce in scale when moving towards the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mr. Pardoe stated that the Chainline Brewery in Kirkland had entrances on the trail and the street and if something like that could be incentivized.

Mr. Calvert followed up by stating the goal of the Downtown Park may have come at a time when the appetite for development along park frontages and public space may not have existed the way it does now. He referenced the Atlanta BeltLine and the Cross Kirkland Corridor as examples of where that concept has been adopted. He stated in the next packet he would include a ULI report on trail oriented development that would include case studies.

Mr. Calvert added that staff was preparing to launch an online survey that would mirror the CAC and stakeholder engagement and that the results would be brought back at the next meeting to see where all groups aligned for goals, objectives, and visions.

Co-chair Wu asked if it would be appropriate for CAC members to follow up with additional questions, ideas, or thoughts. Mr. Calvert stated that yes it was appropriate. Ms. Lau Hui asked if NBBJ's presentation could be distributed to the Committee prior to the next meeting. Mr. Calvert stated that it would be posted on the project website and that it would be included in their next meeting packet.

Mr. Pardoe acknowledged the percentage of land owned or designated to medical uses, and stated that most of those parcels were low density developments and would like information on the actual scale of medical office uses and not just parcel occupation. Mr. Pardoe also wanted to understand the number of people per square foot of medical uses. Mr. Calvert stated that some of that information was included in the existing conditions report and that they can provide additional numbers. Mr. Pardoe stated it seemed like an easy opportunity to densify their uses into towers.

8. Communication with Boards, Commissions, Stakeholders, and the Public

Co-chair Barksdale asked if any Committee members had communication with any commissions, boards, stakeholders, or the public. No one stated that they had any communication.

9. Adjourn

Co-chair Barksdale adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.